

# THE CIVIL WAR

## I. Union War Strategy

- A. Initial attempts to strike decisive blows in Virginia failed miserably (Bull Run, Peninsula Campaign, Vicksburg, Chancellorsville)
- B. Later, developed into four phases: strategy geared more toward attrition
  - 1. Strangle the South by blockading its coasts – **Anaconda Plan**
  - 2. Control the Mississippi River to cut the Confederacy in half.
  - 3. Devastate the South by cutting a swath through GA and then sending troops North through the Carolinas.
  - 4. Capture Richmond by annihilating the remaining Confederate armies.

## II. WAR IN THE EAST: 1861

- A. Battle of **Bull Run** (Manassas) -- July 21, 1861 (30 southwest of Washington)
  - 1. By summer, 1861, public pressure and proddings from the press urged a quick decisive battle to defeat the Confederacy.
  - 2. Battle initially went well for Union forces but reinforcements from the Shenandoah Valley

led by "**Stonewall**" **Jackson** surprised fatigued Union forces.

- 3. By mid-afternoon, Union forces in full retreat back towards defended Washington DC.

- 4. Casualties: Union lost 2,896 men; Confederates lost 1,982

- 5. Psychological impact:

- a. North awoke to the reality of a protracted conflict; began making preparations for a long and bloody war.

- b. Southerners grew complacent; many deserters since they felt war was over.

- Southern enlistments fell off sharply and preparations for a long war relaxed.

- B. General **George B. McClellan** and the Army of the Potomac

- 1. Lincoln gave McClellan command of the Army of the Potomac in late 1861.

- McClellan a brilliant military strategist and leader; 34-year-old from West Point

- 2. Fatal flaw: Overcautious; frequently believed he was outnumbered when in fact he

always

- possessed numerical advantages; Lincoln accused him of having "the slows"

## III. The Union blockade -- "**Anaconda Plan**"

- A. Initially ineffective; 3,500 miles of coastline too daunting for undeveloped Union navy. and undeveloped Union navy.

- B. Concentrated on principal ports and inlets where bulk materials were loaded
  - Eventually pinched blockade-runners

- C. Respected by England; Britain did not want a future war with North

- D. Battle of the **Ironclads**

- 1. **Merrimack (C.S.S. Virginia)** -- former U.S. warship plated on sides with old railroad rails; (not really seaworthy); first of the **ironclads**

- a. Destroyed two wooden ships of Union navy in Chesapeake Bay, VA

- b. Threatened entire Yankee fleet blockading Southern ports.

- 2. **Monitor** -- Union counterpart to **Merrimack** built in 100 days

- a. Engaged **Virginia** at Hampton Roads, VA on March 8-9, 1862

- b. 4 hour battle with neither side winning; **Monitor** withdrew after Captain wounded; both sides claimed victory.

- c. *Virginia* never again a serious threat and eventually blown up at Norfolk by Confederates when ship in danger of falling into Union hands

#### IV. **THE WAR IN THE EASTERN THEATER: 1862**

##### A. The **Peninsula Campaign** (April 5-June 16, 1862)

1. McClellan persuaded Lincoln to abandon a direct frontal assault by land and to try a flanking approach to Richmond by moving up the peninsula between James & York Riv's.
  - After taking a month to take Yorktown, pushed within a few miles of Richmond.
2. **Seven Day's Battles** (June 25-July 1, 1862)
  - a. After Johnstone was injured, **Robert E. Lee** took command of Confederate army.
  - b. After an unsuccessful battle, McClellan withdrew down the peninsula & later retreated
  - c. Robert E. Lee's first victory over the Union.
3. Peninsula campaign abandoned by Lincoln
  - McClellan removed as commander; replaced by General John Pope.
4. Losses: Confederates 20,141; Union 15,849

##### B. **Second Battle of Bull Run** (14 July to 30 August)

1. General Pope put in charge of Union army near Washington.
2. Combined forces of Lee, Jackson, & Longstreet forced Federals to escape once again to Washington.
  - Some blamed McClellan for not coming fast enough to support Pope.
3. Casualties: Union 16,054; Confederates 9,197
4. Lincoln once again gave McClellan command of the Army of the Potomac.

##### C. **Antietam** (September 17, 1862)

1. Lee sought to invade Maryland hoping to wrestle it from the Union and encourage foreign intervention on behalf of the South.
2. Sept. 17 -- Battle of Antietam
  - a. Furious attacks and counterattacks in Sharpsburg, Maryland ended in a stalemate
  - b. McClellan missed opportunity to effectively pursue withdrawing Conf. troops before they crossed the Potomac.
    - Removed from command for 2nd time and replaced by Gen. Ambrose Burnside
  - c. Casualties: Feds 12,401 of 80,000 in army; Conf. 10,700 of 40,000 (over 25%)
    - Bloodiest day of the war.
3. Considered one of most decisive battles in world history.
  - a. South never again so near victory
  - b. Foreign powers decided not to intervene in support of the South whose military capacity was now questioned in the face of a unexpectedly powerful North..
  - c. Lincoln received the "victory" he needed to issue the preliminary **Emancipation Proclamation** on Sept. 22, 1862.
    - Felt issuing the proclamation after successive military defeats would render the edict impotent.

#### V. **The Emancipation Proclamation**

##### A. Became effective Jan. 1, 1863

1. Civil War now became more of a moral crusade: a "higher purpose"
  - Moral cause of South weakened

2. Lincoln's immediate goal not so much to free slaves as to strengthen the moral cause of the Union at home and abroad.
3. Didn't go as far as Congress' existing legislation for freeing enemy-owned slaves
4. Constitutionality of proclamation questionable at the time
  - a. Yet, foreshadowed the doom of slavery
  - b. Became "legal" with the 13th Amendment in 1865
- B. All slaves in areas in rebellion declared now and forever free.
  - Justification lay with removing valuable slave labor from the Southern war cause.
- C. Slaves in loyal Border States not affected nor those in specific areas of conquered South.
  - About 800,000
- D. In effect, did little immediately to change the plight of the slaves.
- E. Reaction to Emancipation Proclamation
  1. Many Northerners, esp. from Border States and Old Northwest felt Lincoln went too far; opposition to fighting an "abolition war"
    - a. Desertions increased sharply esp. from Border States
    - b. Republicans fared badly in autumn mid-term 1862 elections.
      - Lost in NY, PA, OH & IL ; still maintained control of Congress
  2. Many abolitionists complained Lincoln did not go far enough.
  3. Most moderates and some abolitionists pleased including Greeley and Douglass.
  4. South accused Lincoln of trying to stir up slave insurrection.
    - European Aristocrats sympathized with southern aristocrats as proclamation only applied to rebel slaveholders.
  5. European working classes sympathized with proclamation.
    - As a result, diplomatic condition of Union improved.

## VI. **THE WAR IN THE WEST** -- Battle for control of the Mississippi

- A. **Gen. Ulysses S. Grant** became Lincoln's most able general
- B. Grant captured Fort Henry and Fort Donelson in northern TN in Feb. 1862
  1. Significance: KY more secure while gateway opened to rest of TN and GA.
    - Boosted northern morale in the face of humiliating losses in Virginia.
  2. Confederates out of KY and most of TN.
- C. **Shiloh** (April 6 & 7, 1862)
  1. Federals moved down through western Tennessee to take the Confederacy's only east-west railroad linking the lower South to cities on the Confederacy's east coast
  2. Grant victorious but casualties were shocking: 23,746 killed, wounded, or missing
  3. Brought shocking realization to both sides that war would not end quickly
- D. New Orleans taken by Union in spring of 1862; led by **David G. Farragut**

## VII. **War in the East: Lee's last victories and the Battle of Gettysburg**

- A. Lee defeated Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside at Fredericksburg, VA, on Dec. 13, 1862
  1. Burnside launched ill-conceived frontal assault on Confederates dug in behind stone wall.
  2. More than 10,000 Federals killed or wounded in "Burnside's slaughter pen"
  3. Burnside removed from command and replaced by "Fighting Joe" Hooker.
- B. **Chancellorsville** (May 2-4, 1863)
  1. Lee's smaller force split Hooker's army in two.
    - "Stonewall" Jackson made daring move around Union's flank
  2. Union defeated again by a smaller force only half its size

- Hooker shortly after removed and replaced by General George Meade
- 3. Significance: Stonewall Jackson killed accidentally by own man
- Lee: "I have lost my right arm."

4. Casualties: Confederates lost 13,000 men (22% of Lee's army)

### C. **Battle of Gettysburg** (July 1-3, 1863)

1. Lee decided to invade the North again, this time through PA in hopes of strengthening peace movement in North and getting direct foreign support.
2. Bloodiest battle of the Civil War: 53,000 casualties.
3. Day 1 -- July 1 -- Confederates took Gettysburg but Union took high ground overlooking the city.
4. Day 2 -- July 2
  - a. Major engagements occurred on Union right and left; Lee hoped to flank Feds
  - b. Little Round Top held on extreme left; prevented flank from caving in.
5. Day 3 -- July 3
  - a. Lee ordered Gen. George Pickett's division to attack the Union center at Cemetery Ridge; Pickett's division annihilated -- "high tide of the Confederacy" -- Confederates would never again be so close to victory nor on Northern soil.
  - b. Lee retreated while taking full responsibility for the Confederate defeat.
6. Meade neglected to pursue Lee and finish off his army
  - Lincoln after Meade's report that Lee had been repelled: "My God, is that all"
7. Significance: South doomed after Gettysburg and Vicksburg; would never again invade

the

North and would remain in the defensive till war's end.

8. **Gettysburg Address** (November, 1863)
  - a. Established Declaration of Independence as document of founding *law*
  - b. *Equality* became supreme commitment of the federal government
  - c. Established idea of *nation over union*
    - The United States *is* a free country; instead of United States *are* a free country.
  - d. Most Americans today accept Lincoln's concept of America
  - e. Attracted relatively little attention at the time but became one of most important speeches in world history.
    - Union victory proved men are capable of governing themselves in a free society

## VIII. THE END OF THE WAR IN THE WEST

### A. **Vicksburg** campaign lasted seven months

1. Vicksburg last Confederate stronghold on the Mississippi River.
2. July 4, Confederate army surrendered to Grant; 29,500 men.
3. Significance: Split the Confederacy in two and gave Union total control of Miss. River.
  - Boosted Union morale in the face of the Union victory at Gettysburg

### B. **Sherman marches through Georgia**

1. **William Tecumseh Sherman**
  - Pushed his way through GA after the battle of Kenesaw Mountain and captured and burned Atlanta in Sept. 1864.
2. **"March to the Sea":** After taking Atlanta, cut a 60-mile-wide swath through the heart of Georgia before emerging at Savannah on the sea in December, 1864.
  - a. Aimed to destroy supplies destined for the Confederate army and weaken morale of the men at the front by waging war on their homes.

- b. Pioneer of "total war."  
-- Despite brutality, war probably shortened thus saving lives.
- c. Determined to inflict the horrors of war on the South to break its will.  
-- "War is hell"
- 3. Turned northward into South Carolina where destruction more severe than in Georgia
  - a. Capital city of Columbia set aflame.
  - b. Sherman's army reached deep into North Carolina by war's end.

## IX. The Copperheads

- A. Democratic faction that preached either defeatism with disloyal talk or a "peace at any price" philosophy.
  - 1. Many seized without warrant and held for prolonged periods w/o trial.
  - 2. Came to be known as **Copperhead Democrats**, named after poisonous snake which strikes without a warning rattle.
  - 3. Appealed to midwestern farmers whose trade routes were disrupted.
- B. Assailed Lincoln for perpetuating an unjust war.
- C. **Clement L. Vallandigham**
  - 1. Ex-congressman from Ohio who demanded an end to the "wicked & cruel war," denounced conscription and suspension of *habeus corpus*.
  - 2. Convicted by military tribunal in 1863 for treason and sentenced to 2 years in prison.
  - 3. Lincoln banished him to the Confederacy for fear that his imprisonment would make him a martyr to antiwar agitators.
  - 4. Before end of war, returned to Ohio where despite his continued defiance, was not arrested again per Lincoln's orders.  
-- Demonstrated Lincoln's moderation toward political opponents.

## X. Politics and Election of 1864

- A. Congressional Committee on the conduct of the War
  - 1. Formed by anti-Lincoln Republicans tacitly led by Salmon P. Chase
  - 2. Many distrusted his ability and wanted to keep him check.
- B. Abolitionists (such as Phillips and Greeley) demanded immediate freedom for all slaves.
- C. Northern Democrats deeply divided as they lacked a leader.
  - 1. War Democrats supported Lincoln (e.g., Stanton)
  - 2. Peace Democrats numbering 10s of 1000s did not support Lincoln (e.g., McClellan)  
-- Many favored Union through a negotiated peace, not war.
  - 3. Copperheads most radical.
    - a. Some wished the Confederacy victorious; venomously anti-Lincoln
    - b. Strong in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois which contained many Southerners.  
-- Governors struggled to keep states cooperating with federal gov't.
- D. Presidential Candidates
  - 1. **Union party** -- Coalition of the Republican party and War Democrats
    - a. Republican party temporarily out of existence.
    - b. Republicans feared defeat from anti-Lincoln, anti-Republican sentiment
    - c. Lincoln nominated w/o serious dissent despite early push for Chase
    - d. Andrew Johnson v.p. runningmate; loyal War Democrat from TN who had been a small slaveowner when war began.  
-- Put on ticket to attract War Democrats and Border States

- e. Slogan: "Don't swap horses in the middle of the river."
- 2. Democratic Party nominated George McClellan
  - a. Copperheads managed to force platform denouncing prosecution of the war as a failure.
  - b. McClellan repudiated this portion of the platform
- E. Course of the war affected the election.
  - 1. During primaries and during much of the fall, the Union forces were mired in the west and the Wilderness.
    - a. Lincoln believed he would not be reelected.
    - b. Some anti-Lincoln Republicans moved to "dump" Lincoln in favor of a more attractive candidate.
  - 2. Northern victories changed Lincoln's prospects
    - a. **Admiral Farragut** captured Mobile, Alabama; **"Damn the torpedoes! Go ahead!"**
    - b. General Sherman took Atlanta
    - c. General Phillip Sheridan destroyed the Shenandoah Valley
  - 3. Northern soldiers furloughed home to vote for Lincoln; others voted at the front.
- F. Result
  - 1. Lincoln d. McClellan 212 to 21; Lincoln only lost KY, DE, and NJ.
    - McClellan received a surprising 45% of popular vote; 1,803,787 to 2,206,938
  - 2. One of most crushing defeats for the South.
    - a. Lincoln's election assured continued policy of "total war"
    - b. Last real hope for a Confederate victory.
    - c. Confederate desertions increased sharply
- G. **Second Inaugural speech**
  - **"With malice toward none, with charity for all"**

## XI. END OF THE WAR IN THE EAST: Grant's Virginia Campaign

- A. Grant promoted to head of all Union armies after Lincoln's dismay with Meade after Gettysburg
  - 1. Meade still remained head of the Army of the Potomac
  - 2. Grant's strategy to attack the enemy's armies simultaneously thus not allowing them to assist one another; Confederate army would be destroyed piecemeal.
  - 3. Campaign would result in 50,000 Union casualties
- B. **Wilderness** (May & June, 1864) Grant embarked for Richmond with over 100,000 men.
- C. **Spotsylvania Courthouse**: 24,000 casualties
- D. **Cold Harbor** (June 3, 1864)
  - 1. Grant ordered frontal assault at a frightful cost.
  - 2. 7,000 Yankees killed in a half-hour; Confederate losses less than 1,500.
  - 3. Public opinion in North appalled at the losses; Critics: "Grant the Butcher"
  - 4. Grant determined to continue the grind; Lincoln supported him
- E. Siege of **Petersburg** (June-Oct. 1864)
  - 1. Contained all railroads that served Lee's army & Richmond from the south.
  - 2. Lee rushed in time to defend Petersburg; Grant lay siege to the city for 9 months.
  - 3. Along with Richmond, fell on April 2, 1865
- F. Siege of **Richmond** (July-Oct. 1865)
  - 1. Grant hoped to divert Confederate forces from Petersburg

2. Lee sacrificed several detachments in rear guard to evacuate both Richmond & Petersburg successfully.
- G. Early 1865, Confederates attempted to negotiate for peace between the "two countries."
  - Lincoln not willing to accept anything short of unconditional surrender.
- H. Lee's surrender
  1. Confederate army surrounded near Appomattox Court House in VA.
  2. April 9, 1865 -- Lee surrendered the Army of Northern Virginia.
    - a. War in Virginia officially over.
    - b. Remaining Confederate armies surrendered within the next few weeks.
  3. Terms of surrender were generous
    - a. The 30,000 captured Confederates were paroled and allowed to go home so long as they vowed never to take up arms against the Union again.
    - b. Confederates allowed to keep their own horses for spring plowing.
      - Officers could keep their sidearms
  4. Grant: "The war is over; the rebels are our countrymen again."
- XII. Lincoln assassinated on night of April 14, 1865 (Good Friday)
  - A. Only five days after Lee's surrender, Lincoln assassinated at Ford's theater by **John Wilkes Booth**
  - B. Lincoln died at the apex of his fame thus becoming a martyr.
  - C. Although initially jubilant over his death, the South came to view it as calamitous.
    1. Lincoln's approach to reconstruction moderate compared to the later actual policy.
    2. Assassination increased bitterness in the North against the South especially with rumors that Jefferson Davis had plotted it.
- XIII. Prisoner of War Camps
  - A. North treated prisoners better than the South; more resources
  - B. Southern prisons could not provide for POWs since Confederate soldiers often lacked basic necessities.
    - **Andersonville** the most notorious of the POW camps; more than 13,000 died there
- XIV. Results and costs of the Civil War
  - A. 620,000 soldiers dead (2% of population!); over 1 million total casualties; unknown civilian casualties.
    - South lost the cream of its youth and potential leadership
  - B. Slavery abolished
  - C. Total cost of war: \$15 billion (about \$1.5 trillion in today's dollars)
    - Does not include pensions and interest on the national debt.
  - D. States righters were henceforth crushed as the Civil War served as the greatest constitutional decision in U.S. history.
    - Nullification and secession died with the Confederacy
  - E. Ideal of Union and *nation* triumphant
    - Dangers of two nations and balance of power politics averted
  - F. Monroe Doctrine now had more teeth in it.
    - U.S. would now look to the hemisphere and beyond to expand its influence.

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